

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 101

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of legendary guitarist
Reggie Young.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were saddened to learn of the passing of Reggie Young of Nashville, a humble gentleman whose talents as a guitarist were incomparable among his peers yet accessible to the average listener; and

WHEREAS, during a brilliant career that spanned seven decades, Reggie Young served as the anchor of house bands at Memphis's Royal Studios/Hi Records and American Studios and was later one of Nashville's finest session players; and

WHEREAS, greatly revered among his peers, Reggie Young was not a household name, but his signature work on guitar and sitar continues to be heard and appreciated worldwide; and

WHEREAS, his talents earned him engagements with a stunning array of artists, from Bob Dylan to Gladys Knight, the Staple Singers to Paul Simon, Herbie Mann to Joe Cocker, and B.B. King to Sinead O'Connor; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Young played on many monumentally popular recordings, including Dusty Springfield's "Son of a Preacher Man," the Box Tops' "Cry Like a Baby," Elvis Presley's "Suspicious Minds" and "In the Ghetto," and literally hundreds of other hits and classics; and

WHEREAS, always a self-effacing professional, Reggie Young never sought to stand out among his fellow musicians in the studio; he played within the context of the song, adding special touches that magically made the song and the recording better, but he also excelled as a soloist when need be; and

WHEREAS, he invented and played the iconic opening to Dobie Gray's "Drift Away" on the spot in the studio and recorded one of the greatest sitar solos of all-time on B.J. Thomas's "Hooked on a Feeling"; and

WHEREAS, fellow Music City session legend Norbert Putnam called Reggie Young "perhaps the greatest studio guitarist I ever worked with" and a virtuoso who "could play about a dozen styles," and Eric Clapton reportedly said that he was the greatest guitar player he had ever heard; and

WHEREAS, a guitar prodigy, Reggie Young moved with his family to Memphis when he was fourteen years old and was playing professionally there at a mere fifteen years of age; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Young initially backed local rockabilly singer Eddie Bond before being hired away by country star Johnny Horton; and

WHEREAS, signing on as the house guitarist at Memphis's Royal Studios/Hi Records in the late 1950s, he both recorded in the studio and played live on tour with Bill Black's Combo, as a member of which he observed Beatlemania first-hand as the Fab Four's opening act in 1964; and

WHEREAS, after serving a stint in the U.S. Army, Reggie Young returned home to Memphis to play on some of the great soul songs produced at Hi Records by Willie Mitchell; and

WHEREAS, in the mid-1960s, Mr. Young began working with producer Chips Moman at his American Studios; as a member of the label's famed house band, the Memphis Boys, he played guitar on an incredible number of chart hits (120-plus) into the early 1970s for such musical icons as Elvis Presley, Neil Diamond, and B.J. Thomas, among others; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Young left Memphis in 1972 and lived briefly in Atlanta before settling in Nashville and becoming one of Music City's top session players; over the next two decades, he worked with a pantheon of country giants, adding his signature style to songs by Merle Haggard ("Pancho & Lefty"), Willie Nelson ("Always on My Mind"), Waylon Jennings ("Luckenbach, Texas"), Hank Williams, Jr., ("Family Tradition"), Kenny Rogers ("Lucille"), and Reba McEntire ("Little Rock"); and

WHEREAS, after enjoying a long and storied career as a session guitarist, Mr. Young released his first solo album, *Forever Young*, in 2017; and

WHEREAS, although he lived in Nashville, Reggie Young still frequently visited Memphis, where he participated in numerous Elvis-related programs with the Memphis Boys; 2019 marks the fiftieth anniversary of their sessions with Elvis Presley, in honor of which milestone *Reggie Young: Session Guitar Star*, a compilation of his studio work, is being released; and

WHEREAS, Reggie Young was a great guitarist and session player whose talents and recordings will be long remembered and revered, especially among his peers in the Volunteer State music capitals of Memphis and Nashville; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of legendary guitarist Reggie Young, fondly remembering his innovative and iconic work in the studio, and extend our sympathy and condolences to his family, friends, fellow musicians, and music lovers around the world.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.